

Today's News - Thursday, November 4, 2010

- Forget smart growth vs. sprawl - new lines in the sand seem to be between New Urbanism vs. Landscape Urbanism:
- Duany vs. Harvard GSD: he calls it a "coup completed in September" that "was a strategic masterpiece" (Szenasy asks: "is he just looking for a fight, or is there a constructive dialogue to be had here?").
- Meanwhile, Mehaffy questions whether Landscape Urbanism is just "sprawl in a pretty green dress."
- Beirut "politicizes" its "dirty, dangerous green inch" while Djurovic is doing the city's "dirty work by reclaiming every green inch possible" + a Q&A re: his cultural landscapes and the sad state of Lebanon's investments in restoring its public spaces.
- Controversy over new rule to limit glass on buildings in Abu Dhabi: to some, it will force architects to be more creative; for others, not so much.
- Huxtable minces no words about a landmarked Manhattan "jewel box" losing its interior gem in "a perverse form of preservation that begins with a profound misunderstanding" of a Bertoia sculpture's "function as an essential architectural element."
- Much better news re: "mindful preservation" that saved "a seminal work of early modernism" in the Netherlands, garnering the 2010 World Monuments Fund/Knoll Modernism Prize (great pix, slide show!).
- Libeskind tapped to design Finland's second largest indoor arena; re: planning permission, deputy mayor says, "We can always ask the court for permission to begin, if the complaints are not relevant" (check out link to slide show - seems there's a lot more planned than just an arena).
- Toronto names an impressive planning, design and compliance team for Athletes' Village for the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games, and issues an RFQ to design, build and finance the project (deadline looms!).
- Brussat at his best dissecting "why ugly buildings get stupid names" with a tip o' the hat to Kieran Long, but London might not be the "world capital of buildings with derisive monikers" (check out Providence, RI: Ice Cube in Diapers, anyone?).
- Ai Weiwei claims the order to demolish his Shanghai studio "a trap"; his architect hopes to stave off demolition.
- Per Duany's rant (above), an ode to the designers and caretakers of Harvard's own landscapes: "sustainable outdoor havens" that "make land into art."
- Call for entries: CNU 2011 Charter Awards (how timely considering today's lead stories).
- Yes, Halloween is over, but we couldn't resist an amazing eyeful of "Awesome Arch-O-Lanterns" that prove "Auto-CAD will never beat a good X-Acto knife" wielded by clever designers.

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Duany vs Harvard GSD: The Father of New Urbanism finds Ecological Urbanism troublesome...It was clear that the venerable Urban Design program would be eliminated or replaced by Landscape Urbanism...there will not be much of whatever remained of the urbane, urban design sensibility. Landscape/Ecological Urbanism will rule without dissension. By Andres Duany -- Charles Waldheim; Rem Koolhaas; Jane Drew; Mohsen Mostafavi; Rahul Mehrotra; Alex Krieger; CNU-Metropolis Magazine

Landscape Urbanism: Sprawl in a Pretty Green Dress? The latest in a series of academic challenges to the New Urbanism turns out to be weak in all the areas that matter most...Landscape Urbanists' shallow "understanding" of the forces that generated sprawl seem more aimed at constructing a "grand narrative" that declares that nothing is to be done, except to create art. -- By Michael Mehaffy/Sustasis Foundation -- Alex Krieger; Charles Waldheim; James Corner- PLANetizen

Beirut Politicizes The City's Dirty, Dangerous Green Inch: The Green Party and Lebanon's residents are lucky to have in their midst...the architect who is doing Beirut's dirty work by reclaiming every green inch possible. Even the slightest transformation...receives widespread acclaim, pointing perhaps to what is wrong with what used to be a city chock full of cultural wonder. -- Vladimir Djurovic- Green Prophet (Middle East)

Interview with Vladimir Djurovic on His Cultural Landscapes: After years of civil war...Lebanon has focused on rebuilding its housing and infrastructure. Has there been equal investment in restoring its public spaces? "Unfortunately not....The only savior in this respect has been a private company called Solidere [and] their master plan of Beirut Central District. The rest of the country and its people are in dire need of such initiatives." [images]- The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Controversy over 30% glass limit on buildings: Applying only to...Abu Dhabi, the rules will give designers the option of a prescriptive or performance-based approach to achieving energy savings..."Architecturally, it will force people to be more creative...Designers just need to put a bit more thought into it now." -- Stride Treglown; BDP architects; Inhabit Group- ConstructionWeekOnline (Dubai, UAE)

A Landmark Jewel Box Loses Its Biggest Gem: It's time to stop worrying about whether New York has enough "starchitecture" and consider the ways in which we are destroying or sabotaging the architecture we already have...removal of the Bertoia screen wall is a perverse form of preservation that begins with a profound misunderstanding of the sculpture's function as an essential architectural element. By Ada Louise Huxtable -- Gordon Bunshaft/Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); Harry Bertoia; Henry Dreyfus; Karrie Jacobs- Wall Street Journal

Mindful Preservation Saves Early Modern Landmark: Dutch architects...the recipients of the 2010 World Monuments Fund/Knoll Modernism Prize for the restoration and rehabilitation of the Zonnestraal Sanatorium in Hilversum, the Netherlands...considered a seminal work of early modernism. -- Johannes Duiker/Bernard Bijvoet (1931); Bierman Henket architecten; Wessel de Jonge architecten; Docomomo [imges, slide show]- The Architect's Newspaper

Daniel Libeskind to design new Tampere Central Arena: Finland's second largest indoor arena; it is to be used for 2013 Ice Hockey World Championships...estimates that the City Council would confirm it in the spring of 2011..."We can always ask the court for permission to begin, if the complaints are not relevant"... [link to images]- Helsingin Sanomat (Finland)

Planning, design and compliance team chosen for Athletes' Village for the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games: Infrastructure Ontario, Waterfront Toronto also launch request for qualifications to design, build and finance the project. Deadline: November 26 -- HOK; Montgomery Sisam; du Toit Architects (DTAH); Quadrangle Architects; Populous [link to RFQ]- InsideToronto.com

Why ugly buildings get stupid names: ...nicknames fill in for the absence of formal clarity, the purpose of which is to reveal a building's function...So people call them what they do look like, and the more ridiculous the better...It is not "apparently irreverent." It is irreverent...That ugly buildings have stupid names is only fair. By David Brussat- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

Order to destroy art studio a trap: Ai Weiwei: Authorities in Shanghai said...studio was constructed illegally...Ai said the head of Jiading district invited him to build the studio two years ago...signed a 30-year lease with the village committee...Lü said he would keep communicating with the government in an effort to save the studio. -- Lü Hengzhong- Global Times (China)

Architects of the Outdoors: The sculptors of Harvard landscapes create sustainable outdoor havens...This drive to balance the functional and sustainable with the aesthetically appealing lies at the heart of Harvard's many recent green initiatives...the drive not just to preserve and restore our environment but ultimately to enjoy it. It is the drive to make land into art. -- Wayne P. Carbone; Frederick Law Olmsted; Michael Van Valkenburgh- The Harvard Crimson

Call for entries: CNU 2011 Charter Awards: recognize outstanding design, development and policy achievements from around the world that embody CNU principles and expand our understanding of their role in transforming communities for the better; deadline: January 12, 2011- Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU)

Spooky Starchitects: Scary Gehry and 15 Other Awesome Arch-O-Lanterns: Showing just how clever - and skilled! - good designers can be. Kyle May of Abrahams-May and Julia van den Hout of Steven Holl turned their favorite architects, from Mies to Gehry, Zaha to Zumthor, into Jack-O-Lanterns...Auto-CAD will never beat a good X-Acto knife, at least not on All Hallow's Eve. By By Matt Chaban [slide show]- New York Observer

A Meditation on the Beauty of Zaha Hadid's Door Handle: Hadid's design issues a challenge: define beauty by lyrically playing with illusion. By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow



-- Richard Meier & Partners: Coffee Plaza, Hamburg, Germany
-- Atelier Jean Nouvel: Seguin Island, Paris, France

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